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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses seven ways in which college faculty can become actively engaged in scholarship about teaching. The seven principle components of teaching are as follows: (1) subject matter expertise; (2) organized presentation of subject matter; (3) concern for curricular relevance and coherence; (4) informing the curricular change process; (5) developing curricular support materials; (6) mentoring students; and (7) collegial relationships with other faculty. The first two components relate primarily to areas of classroom performance, whereas the last five involve those activities which are also related to teaching but not necessarily to classroom performance. The paper presents, in support of its position, a list of the aspects of teaching which are evaluated at the University of California, Berkeley, for faculty advancement and promotion. Also provided are some guiding questions that capitalize on the subject matter expertise of faculty concerning course materials and grading, as well as a list of questions that can be used in observing classroom behaviors. Contains 5 references. (GLR)

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MULTIPLE ROLES FOR FACULTY AS SCHOLARS ABOUT TEACHING

by
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University Assessment
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Kalamazoo, Michigan
March 20, 1990

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Before we discuss the various ways in which faculty can become actively engage in scholarship about teaching, I should provide you with a definition of teaching. I am not talking about the judgment of the platform or presentation skills that a person has. I'm using a definition of teaching where most of the activities take place outside of the classroom. Some may quibble with the activities that I'm going to call teaching. They might rather place these activities under the heading of Professional Service or Research. But I doubt whether anyone would say that they are outside the realm of a University Professor's professional work. Let me give you a visual to help you see a professors life, as I would like to describe it.

Consider a lucite shoe box that has two vertical lines drawn on its long side to create three equal areas. The first third of the box is for Research activities, the second third for Service activities and the last third for Teaching. (These are in alphabetical order. I'm not going to make a judgment about the priority order of the three activities. Nor would I make a judgment about whether carbon dioxide or water is more important

to plant life.) Let's fill the box with the amount of time that we want to associate with "work" -- half full, whatever you think is fair or reasonable or represents what you see around you. If we use water to represent time and center the shoe box on a fulcrum, we have a perfectly balanced object. The water is evenly distributed in the three areas. Now let's add a little reality to the image, a grant comes into the department (a weight is added to one side of the fulcrum) and the box tips in one direction. Someone in the department goes on an unexpected leave of absence and the courses need to be covered (a weight is added to the other side of the fulcrum), the box tips in the other direction. It's a catalog year, it's an accreditation year (people are jumping up and down on the fulcrum) -- the water sloshes into great waves in the center. This fluid changing view of our work is most comfortable to me. Of course, some people start their careers with the fulcrum off-center. The water in these careers is never level. Because I'm not an engineer, I'm not going to try to explain what happens when unexpected weights are added to a system out of balance. I think these people don't experience the same pressures of a dynamic system.

Table 1 lists seven principal components of "Teaching." Area 1, subject matter expertise, is probably self-evident. You cannot teach something you do not know. Great coaches may not

have been great players, but they know the rules of the game well. Area 2, organized presentation of subject matter, concerns the way in which an individual communicates material to learners. Information concerning the way in which this component is performed comes to us from the student rating forms, but also can be collected from peers. While each of these areas is likely to pervasively influence all aspects of a professors performance, they are most directly associated with teaching as a classroom function. The other five areas capture those activities which are related to teaching, but do not necessarily relate to classroom performance.

Area 3, concern for curricular relevance and coherence, is a component of teaching which many say is professional service. It is participation in the committees which make decisions concerning the curriculum not only at every level of the University (department, college and senate Councils), but also committees of relevant state government, or state and national professional organizations which set standards for curriculum. These groups set the standards for the learning experiences that we provide for students. I must confess that I am sometimes puzzled by the way in which decisions are made and standards are set. Too many times people describe their own undergraduate experience as a rationale for changing the experience of our own

students. But we (the professoriate) make the decisions about what acceptable majors are, what general education should be, and what the standards for accreditation should be. Sometimes you hear people complain that accreditation standards or certification standards are lock-stepping programs. But the membership in the committees which set those standards is never discussed. The negotiations for the standards of acceptable programs takes place among the relevant professorial groups. We decide who represents us on those committee by nomination, election or unfortunately sometimes default.

Area 4, informing the curricular change process, is slightly different in my view. This process involves the publication of articles in the educational branch of our professional literature. Publications, I think, come in two varieties. There are articles which specify the need for a certain type of skill in students based upon logic, e.g., articles which describe the need for good communication, group process and problem solving skills in engineers based upon the type of work environment in which they will work. Many times these articles are written by employers. But there is no reason to believe this kind of publication is exclusively the realm of the outsiders. On the other hand, each of our professions has journals which are dedicated to the publication of empirical studies of classroom

strategies. Educational research articles which describes the efficacy of using a particular type of software or lab configuration inform all professional engineering educators. Articles in the professional literature often serve as the triggers for task forces or committees to set new standards for the curriculum. Hence, they serve a very important curricular purpose.

Area 5, developing curricular support materials, is quite close conceptually to area 4. In this component, I would put the development of all materials which not only help the individual teach a class, but also those which are publicly available, e.g., textbooks, software, workbooks, PASS materials. Unfortunately, the scholarship associated with both of these areas is often not valued by P & T committees or for that matter some of our colleagues. The educational journals of a discipline or a profession sometimes get classified as practitioner oriented -- not real research. Our colleagues who write software publicly complain that no one will give them credit for their work. I contend that the problem occurs because these products are associated with other material that is clearly research, pure or applied, within the discipline or the profession. If these products were reviewed in light of their contribution to the scholarship on teaching rather than the contribution they made to

the discipline itself, P & T committees would have an easier time making judgments.

Areas 3, 4, and 5 are those components of teaching that define the Change Agent Role of the professor rather than the primary role of the transmission of information. Table 2 shows those activities moving from those most relevant to a single classroom learning experience to those which are more likely to influence policy either in the classroom or in the curriculum.

The final two areas concern our relationship with others. Area 6, mentoring students, involves all of the activities we perform to facilitate the professional and personal development of our students. This includes, but isn't limited to, the role of academic advisor, advisor on senior projects, advisor to extracurricular clubs, and bridge partner. It is difficult to separate the teacher in us from the researcher in us as we guide our graduate students through their first research experience. But I would guess that most of what we do is teach. Yes, particularly when the research is dependent on laboratory equipment and contacts with industry, the idea is often ours. The student "buys into" the line of research that the faculty member is pursuing. But we must make the activities the students, so that when they defend their thesis and publish their thesis, they feel the ownership of authorship. The final

component attests to our responsibility to each other. As we mentor students, so must we also mentor young faculty.

In order to give myself some credibility, here is the list of the aspects of teaching which must be evaluated at UC - Berkeley for Advancement and Promotion: 1) Design and redesign of courses, 2) Presentation of material, 3) Command of the subject, 4) Contribution to curriculum and instruction, 5) Directing student research, 6) Advising, and 7) Guiding and supervising graduate student instructors. (Davis, 1988) These seven areas of virtue may not be exactly the same as my list, but I think the lists are fairly similar. The Teaching Dossier which must be prepared for promotion or tenure, then, contains quite a bit more than simply student ratings. The Dossier must contain: 1) A department letter summarizing the candidate's teaching, 2) The department ad hoc committee report for midcareer review, promotion to tenure, and promotion to professor, 3) A statement by the candidate reflecting on each of the areas of teaching with supporting information, 4) Descriptions of the courses taught by the candidate, 5) Descriptions of student research which the candidate has directed, 6) Peer evaluations of the candidates qualification, 7) Student evaluations of the candidates qualifications and 8) Alumni evaluations of the candidates qualifications. This system requires much higher participation

of faculty as Mentors and Colleagues.

There are at least four different areas in which the judgment of a qualified faculty member cannot be substituted with judgments from students. These areas are: the review of course materials, observations of classrooms, reviews of articles about curriculum and review of manuscripts or books. The judgment of the faculty member comes from the full context of not only the discipline at large, but also the goals of a particular program. However, we have very little experience in these areas. All of us, know how to review an article for one of our research journals, but how do you review a colleagues syllabus without stepping on his or her academic freedom.

In some respects, those of us who work in professional or applied programs have a much easier job than those who are members of the more traditional academic disciplines. (I said that carefully, since I agree with you that Mechanical Engineering is an academic discipline just as I'm sure you would grant me that educational measurement is an academic discipline.) Our programs are often highly structured. People who teach 250 know exactly what is supposed to be in 251 and vice versa. But, perhaps, more importantly we specify that students must take both 250 and 251 so that they understand our discipline. We have overarching program goals into which an individual course must

fit. Consequently, quite often our departments have traditions of joint development of courses and the use of common syllabi be professors who teach multiple sections of the same course. There is a fine line here which must not be crossed. Every professor has to make the course unique by playing from his or her strengths. We do not want to over program a course. If a professor is to be judged on the basis of his or her contributions to the course, he or she must have an opportunity to exert influence. Additionally, we know that professors will not fell job satisfaction if they are not allowed to individualize the material in a course.

Davis (1988) provides some guiding questions for the review of course materials which I have displayed in Table 3. Notice, that nowhere in the list is the question: "Is this how I would approach teaching this class?" In other words, the professor is totally free to cover the material in his or her best academic judgment -- just as any author is totally free when submitting an article to a journal. But, just as journals have more than one person review an article for publication, we are bound by prudent judgment to provide our colleagues with more than one review of course related materials. If time and money were not a consideration, then we would not collect information solely from internal colleagues. For "high stakes" decisions, e.g., tenure,

we would collect information from professional colleagues at other institutions. Also, no decision (no matter how much it was considered "low stakes") should be made on the basis of a single person's judgment or a single data point. For instance, if you were a young faculty member, you would ask a few people in your department to observe your teaching in a number of different courses and compare their judgments with the responses students made to course rating forms before you began making decisions about change. Patterns of data are a much more valid basis for decisions than a single data point.

Notice that Table 3 lists questions which are particularly designed to capitalize on the subject matter expertise of faculty. The questions in the Course Description section concern the extent to which this course fits into the departmental program and the extent to which the subject matter in the course is current. However, faculty are asked to use their expertise not only on the material presented in the class, but the way in which students are asked to show their command of the material. The last three sections of the review asks faculty members to make judgments about the assignments, exams and grading procedures used in the class.

These sections are not designed to question a faculty members standards in grading, although the issues of fairness and

standards are raised. Rather they are designed around the dual premises: 1) What you ask students to do in assignments and exams is the way you tell them what is important and 2) Feedback to students given as part of exams or assignments is a key element in the learning process. In other words, it's not enough to plan a course by considering the presentation of the material to students. One must consider the way in which students are asked to practice the material. Our colleagues in English remind us of this when they say that the skill of writing is developed by writing and rewriting after comments.

Table 4 gives a list of questions that can be used in the observation of a classroom. The reason for peer observation of the classroom is twofold. Peer observation supplies evidence to counter or support the information provided by student ratings. However, in the case of formative reviews rather than summative reviews, the observations of a "coach" or mentoring colleague provide the young professional with assistance in developing good classroom skills. Additionally, faculty members subject matter expertise is used to collect information on the matter of content. However, the major reason for peer observation is to substantial or disprove the information from the student ratings. Because of the contrast with student ratings (data which are gathered a number of different times to create patterns),

observations should be done a number of different times to create patterns. Many institutions use video tapes of young professors or graduate students as an instructional development technique. In this case, the person trying to develop new skills not only gets feedback from the mentor but can watch himself or herself to gain insight into various presentation styles. Some of these skills can be developed easily once a flaw has been identified. Others take a good deal of practice to develop and maintain. The use of video tape or multiple observations followed by a consultation allow for the development of skill. Without the time invested by a good "coach" these skills will not be developed.

I'm sure some of you are thinking: "How can these observations be done? Who has time to serve on all of these committees? When can I review a colleagues exams? There simply isn't enough time." I'm not saying that each professor should be observed each year X number of times. There are some points in a career which call for more data collection and more mentoring. Early in a career, people need assistance. Department Chairs are in an excellent position to be the initial mentor for a young faculty member. Before departments decide to grant someone tenure, the department needs data upon which the decision should be made. These data are likely to serve the exclusive role of

support for a decision. In cases where the decision is positive, they can also be used to improve performance. Later in some careers, student rating data reveals some problems in the classroom which should be substantiated from an outside source.

Like everything else in our lives, the extent to which we have time for something depends upon how important it is to us. Individually and collectively we have to take a look at our shoe box and the fulcrum position. I don't think that anyone needs to add extra water or time commitments. Rather we need to look at how we are currently spending our time. What roles are be currently playing? There may be an extra weight put on one side of the box this year, but in order to participate fully in the teaching experience we must play multiple roles as scholars.

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Table 1

The seven Principal Components of Teaching

1. Subject Matter Expertise
2. Organized presentation of subject matter
3. Concern for curricular relevance and coherence
4. Informing the curricular change process
5. Developing curricular support materials
6. Mentoring students
7. Collegial relationships with other faculty

Table 2

THE CHANGE AGENT ROLE OF TEACHING

* Authoring Textbooks
* Authoring software tutorials
* Developing Video presentations

* Serving on the Departmental Curriculum Committee
* Serving on the College Curriculum Committee
* Serving on the University Curriculum Committee
* Serving on a Professional Organization Task Force
* Serving on an Accreditation Organization Task Force or site visitation team
* Serving on a state committee is develop the certification examination

* Writing articles about needed change in the curriculum for professional journals (expert judgment)
* Researching the relationship between skills taught in the curriculum and skills used on the job (empirical studies)

Table 3
Review of Course Materials

Course Description

1. Are the instructors's objectives in keeping with the mission of the department's curriculum?
2. Do these objectives complement -- rather than needlessly replicate -- related courses in the department and other departments?
3. Does this course prepare students for more advanced work in the field?
4. Is the treatment of the subject matter consistent with the latest research and thinking in the field?
5. Is this material valuable and worth knowing?
6. Is the content appropriately challenging for the students?
7. Is the course well organized? Are topics logically sequenced? Does each topic receive adequate attention relative to other topics?

Reading Lists, Course Readers, and Textbooks

1. Are the assigned readings intellectually challenging?
2. Are the tests the work of recognized authorities?
3. Do the texts represent the best work in the field?
4. Do they offer a diversity of up-to-date views?
5. Are the reading assignments appropriate in level and length for the course?

Assignments and Homework

1. Are assignments effectively coordinated with the syllabus and well integrated into the course?
2. Do they provide challenging and meaningful experiences for students?
3. Do they give students opportunities to apply concepts and demonstrate their understanding of the subject?
4. Are they appropriate in frequency and length?

Exams and Quizzes

1. Are tests consistent with the course objectives?
2. Do they give students a fair opportunity to

demonstrate their abilities?

3. Do tests focus on important aspects of the subject matter?
4. Do they adequately cover the subject matter?
5. Are they intellectually challenging?
6. Are test items well written and unambiguous?
7. Are these questions that assess students' abilities to apply concepts as well as questions that test students' memory?
8. Are test routinely revised each time the instructor offers the course?

Grading Assignments and Exams

1. Is grading fair and consistent?
2. Are the standards for grading clearly communicated to students?
3. Are these standards reasonable for this particular course? Are they consonant with departmental standards?
4. Does the instructor write constructive comments on papers and tests?

Table 4

Classroom Behaviors to be Observed

Content Related Behaviors

1. Presents material generally accepted by colleagues as worth knowing.
2. Has a good command of the material.
3. Distinguishes between factual material and opinions.
4. Presents divergent viewpoints when appropriate.
5. Includes a sufficient amount of material in a class period.

Organizational Behaviors

1. States the purpose of the lecture or class session.
2. Presents a brief overview or outline of the content at the beginning of the session or states the problem to be solved or discussed.
3. Explicitly states the relationship between today's session and the previous one.
4. Explicitly states the relationships among various ideas.
5. Emphasizes or restates the most important ideas.
6. Makes smooth transitions from one topic to another.
7. Responds to students' questions about the material.
8. Summarizes the main points or asks students to do so.
9. Relates today's session to upcoming presentations.

Style of Presentation

1. Speaks in a clear, strong voice that can be easily heard.
2. Raises or lowers voice for variety and emphasis
3. Speaks neither too fast or too slow.
4. Speaks at a rate that allows students to take notes.
5. Talks to the class, not to the board or windows.
6. Establishes and maintains eye contact equally among students.
7. Listens carefully to students' comments and questions.
8. Displays enthusiasm for the subject matter.

Clarity of Presentation

1. Defines new terms, concepts and principles.

2. Reiterates definitions of new terms.
3. Gives examples, illustrations or applications to clarify abstract concepts.
4. Explicitly relates new ideas to familiar ones.
5. Uses alternative explanations when students do not understand.
6. Slows down when discussing complex and difficult topics.
7. Does not digress from the main topic.
8. Uses handouts and audiovisual aids effectively.
9. Writes legibly and clearly on the chalkboard.

Questioning skills

1. Asks questions to determine what students know about the topic.
2. Asks different kinds of questions to challenge students, e.g. interpretation or synthesis.
3. Periodically asks questions to gauge whether students need more or less information on a topic.
4. Addresses questions to individuals as well as to the group at large.
5. Pauses after all questions to allow students time to respond.
6. Encourages students to answer difficult questions by providing cues or rephrasing.
7. When necessary, asks students to clarify their questions.
8. Asks follow-up questions if a student's answer is incomplete or superficial.
9. Requests that difficult, time-consuming questions of <u>limited interest</u> be discussed during office hours.

Student Interest and Participation

1. Receives students' questions politely and when possible enthusiastically.
2. Notes and responds to signs of student's puzzlement or boredom.
3. Encourages students to participate in the discussion.
4. Tolerates other viewpoints.
5. Makes all students feel comfortable in class.
6. Addresses some students by name.
7. Varies activities over the class period.
8. Does not dominate the class discussion.